



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
February 25, 2003

Trafficking in Persons National Security Presidential Directive

President George W. Bush has signed a National Security Presidential Directive to advance the United States Government's fight against trafficking in persons, a modern day form of slavery. This policy directive follows from the President's actions taken on February 13, 2002, when he signed Executive Order 13257 to establish a Cabinet-level Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Generally speaking, trafficking in persons refers to actions, often including use of force, fraud, or coercion, to compel someone into a situation in which he or she will be exploited for sexual purposes, which could include prostitution or pornography, or for labor without compensation, which could include forced or bonded labor. The United States is committed to the eradication of human trafficking both domestically and abroad. It is a crime that is an affront to human dignity.

Trafficking in persons is often linked to organized crime, and the profits from trafficking enterprises help fuel other illegal activities. The growth of vast transnational criminal networks supported in part by trafficking in persons fosters official corruption and threatens the rule of law. The Administration policy includes the use of law enforcement tools, prevention efforts, and victim protection and assistance.

According to some estimates, each year at least 700,000 and possibly as many as 4 million people, primarily women and children, are trafficked around the world, including thousands into the United States. Many victims are lured from their homes with promises of well-paying jobs. Once they are deprived of the opportunity to return home, they are forced or coerced into prostitution, domestic servitude, farm or factory labor, or other types of forced labor. A significant number of children are trafficked worldwide. Prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, as does sex tourism, which is an estimated \$1 billion per year business worldwide. The exposure of trafficked people to abuse, deprivation and disease, including HIV, is unconscionable.

Our commitment to eradicate trafficking includes: vigorously enforcing U.S. laws against all those who traffic in persons; raising awareness at home and abroad about human trafficking and how it can be eradicated; identifying, protecting, and assisting those victims exploited by traffickers; reducing the vulnerability of individuals to trafficking through increased education, economic opportunity, and protection and promotion of human rights; employing diplomatic and foreign policy tools to encourage other nations, the UN and other multilateral institutions to work with us to combat this crime, draft and enforce laws against trafficking, and hold accountable those engaged in it.

The United States Government's specific efforts to combat trafficking in persons include:

- The Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons assessed the progress of 165 governments in addressing trafficking and published findings in the second annual Trafficking in Persons Report. Former Congressman John Miller was recently named to head the office.
- In FY 2002 the Department of State funded over 110 anti-trafficking programs in some 50 countries. includes shelters for trafficking victims, support for return and reintegration for victims, and law enforcement training.
- The Department of Justice prosecuted 76 traffickers in FY 2001 and 2002, three times as many as in the previous two years. It has 125 open trafficking investigations as of today - nearly twice as many as in January 2001.

The Department of Justice conducted its largest ever anti-trafficking training for federal prosecutors and agents in October 2002 at the Department's training facility in South Carolina. In December 2002, the Justice Department held the first Department summit on protecting children from prostitution and launched a pilot program to enable communities to respond to this problem.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service issues the "T visa" to enable certain trafficking victims to live and legally in the United States for three years while their cases are investigated and prosecuted.

The Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services are working together to certify hundreds of trafficking victims so that they may receive federal and state benefits and services including employment authorization, housing, and medical care.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has implemented a process for certifying victims of a severe form of trafficking so that victims may receive the wide-range of services that help them to recover and gain self-sufficiency. To date, HHS has certified over 370 victims.

The Department of Health and Human Services has provided over \$4 million in grant funding to non-profit organizations throughout the country which provide community education, outreach, and direct assistance to victims of trafficking. Combined with HHS's outreach efforts, these grantees have already reached well over 3,000 individuals and organizations throughout the country, increasing knowledge, fostering program development and encouraging a call to action to stop severe forms of trafficking.

Since January 2001, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has significantly increased its support for anti-trafficking activities in developing and transition countries. In FY 2002 USAID spent more than \$10 million in over 30 countries in which there are significant levels of severe forms of trafficking in persons.

The Department of Labor negotiated a \$1.2 million cooperative agreement with the International Research and Exchanges Board, a non-governmental organization, to conduct a two-year anti-trafficking project in Eastern Europe. Started in November 2001, this program aims to prevent the trafficking of women by creating viable economic alternatives for at-risk women in seven major cities.

The Department of Labor has supported projects through the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor to address child trafficking in 17 countries around the world. These projects rescue children from trafficking and exploitative work situations and provide them with rehabilitation services and educational opportunities. They also undertake efforts to prevent children from being trafficked in the first place.

The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) sent a Directive to its field offices outlining the provisions of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 allowing victims to receive job training other services without regard to their immigration status. The services provided at ETA One-Stop Centers, such as job search assistance, career counseling and occupational skills training, may be of significant value to trafficking victims.

###

Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030225.html>

**Click to Print
this document** 